

REFLECTIONS

On that

DISCOURSE

Which a Master of Arts (once) of the University of
Cambridg, Calls

RATIONAL,

Presented in Print to a Person of Honour, 1676.

CONCERNING

Transubstantiation.

By one of no Arts, but down-right Honesty.

At the instance of an Honourable Person.

LONDON,

Printed in the Year, 1676.

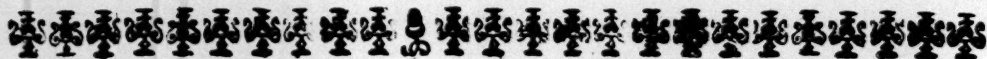


Imprimatur,

Nihil in hoc libello reperio doctrinae Ecclesiae Anglicanae, aut bonis moribus contrarium,

Jul. 10, 1676.

G. Jane.



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*The four Bulrush-pillars, so confidently Erected for the support of his whole Building, are,*

1. The Possibility of it, to Gods Power.
2. Sayings of the Fathers, founding that way.
3. Oral Tradition } supposed for it.
4. Miracles

*The first of these we deny not; only we are a little confident there is neither sufficient evidence that it is so, nor any need it should be so, ( pag. 4 ).*

*As to the second, judicat Lector, many of his proofs ( granting them gennine and true ) make nothing against us; others must be tried by Vincentius's rule: All are reduceable to a sound sense, in St. Augustine's or Origen's way ( pag. 5, &c ).*

*The third is a mere Chymera ( pag. 6 ).*

*The fourth, often illusive, frequently false, never to be trusted to ( Deut. 13. 1, 2. Matt. 13. 22 ), if they run contrary to the written word; or have not its concurrence ( pag. 8 ).*

*To each of these somewhat, though not following him into every distinct Paragraph.*



*Romani addictus jurare in Verba Magistri,*



His Master of Arts (as he would have us know) resolves, first, to lay down his Position in the most ample (not to say, prodigious) Terms; and then to try his skill in the Defence of it.

*My Sentiments* (says he) *concerning the Adorable Eucharist, is, That it is neither less nor more than the Sacred Body and Blood of God; neither less nor more than whole Christ, God and man, Soul, Body and Divinity: though for the love and service of Sinners, vested under the vile Accidents and appearances of Common Bread, and Ordinary Wine.*

Concerning which mystery, his first Assertion must be, That it is possible to the Omnipotent Power of God.

1. And (I must confess) this shew of an Argument went far with me, whilst I was born in hand, and did think (for even I also had Espoused certain mis-beliefs, during my Minority, by the prevalency of Education) That the vile *Protestants* had denied the Lord God to be Almighty, upon this very account; but it ceased (by the Divine Goodness) to be so with me, when I could not but discern, and at length was fully convinc'd,

1. That the true intent, purpose, and meaning of our Saviour, did not at all oblige us to think of Transubstantiation.

2. That there is no necessity, import, or use for it (no service, as our Author phrases it) in the Christian Church.

And I shall candidly declare (leaving the Philosophical impossibility of Transubstantiation to be demonstrated by some other hand) what has given me intire satisfaction as to this great Point.

I perceive by Christs own words, (recorded *Joh. 6. 53.*) that I am under an absolute necessity of eating his Flesh, and drinking his Blood; And therefore, having (in the first place) considered of how great concern it is, to arrive at the true meaning of them, I do humbly supplicate the Divine Majesty, That he will give me (ever) to think comprehend, speak of, and go about that great Mystery so, as may be best pleasing to him, and most expedient for my soul.

His own Paraphrase on what he had said, cannot deceive me, I dare believe (since he so told his inquisitive Disciples, *Vers. 63.*) That the life of them



them is wrapt up in a Spiritual acception. And since, he declares (where he terms himself the Bread of Life, *Vers.* 35.), That whoſo cometh to him, (which is the peculiar act of Faith, *Joh.* 1. 12, , ſhall never hunger; ſince he attributes moſt clearly (in purſuit ſtill of the ſame Metaphor) the quenching of thirſt, to believing; what need we, how can we doubt any more of the matter? He takes off their amazement, and gives ſtop to their murmurs, (*Vers.* 61.) not by telling them, That though they were to ſee him aſcend up where he was before, yet they were ere long to have him corporally preſent (in the form of Bread) on ten thouſand (diſtant) Altars at once; nay in the very jaws of every Perſon (how wicked ſoever) that comes but to eat there: He does not, I ſay, make his return at this rate, but inſtructs them how to Spiritualize: the whole buſineſs, *Vers.* 62, 63. Neither would there be any thing difficult or obſcure in the words of Inſtitution afterwards: For, (beſides, that he had here pre-inſtructed them), There was almoſt nothing among the *Jews* (which had Type or ſignificancy in it) but was expreſſed in this very manner: Circumciſion, the Paſchal-Lamb, Manna, the Rock, were all ſufficiently known to carry the names of thoſe things they did but adumbrate.

There is one Scripture, (*Joh.* 6.) *He that eats my fleſh, and drinks my blood, hath eternal life abiding in him, and I will raiſe him up at the laſt day.*

Hence hath the memorable *Uſher* framed this Syllogiſm, I think irrefragable.

The Body and Blood of Chriſt is received unto Life, by all that do receive it, and by none unto Condemnation:

But, that which is (outwardly) delivered in the Sacrament, is not received by all unto Life; but by many unto Condemnation; *Ergo*,

Therefore, that which is outwardly taken in this Sacrament, is not really the Body and Blood of Chriſt.

II. This Spiritual manducation (and none other) was the true ſenſe of the Primitive Church.

I prove it by Saint *Auguſtine*, in his 20th Tract he hath theſe words; The Sacrament of this thing (*viz.* of our eating the Fleſh of Chriſt) is taken from the Lords Table, by ſome unto Life, by ſome unto Deſtruction: But the thing it ſelf (whereof it is a Sacrament) is received by every man (that does receive it) unto Life; and by none unto Deſtruction. *Proſper* (from him) tells us, *Qui diſcordat a Chriſto nec carnem ejus manducat, nec Sanguinem bibit.* More plainly yet, *St. Auguſtine* again, (on *Pſal.* 97.) With the moſt holy Sacrament, not the Fleſh which was Crucified, is carnally eaten; but the virtues of that Fleſh are really eaten by the Soul, in ſuch manner as the Soul can eat; that is, Spiritually, by her affections, and other immanent real acts, or internal Operations.

Wee'l own (and that without any prejudice to our cauſe), That many of the Fathers did chuſe, and were delighted to imitate our Saviours way  
of

of Locution ( even through long discourses ) ; yet 'tis evident we ought to understand them, as *Origen* ( after he had played the Rhetorician, in this sort ) concludes ( on *Matth. 15.* ) *Et hac quidem, de typico symbolicoque Corpore.*

*Augustine* ( *Quest. 13. in Levit.* ) says, Seven Ears of Corn were seven years, and the Blood is called the Soul after the manner of Sacraments: And what think you, must there not needs be a Figure in that speech of Christ, when ( instituting the latter part of this Sacrament ) he pronounced, *This Cup is the New-Testament?* *Luk. 22. 20.*

If the Master of Arts will but bring along with him one Note out of *St. Vincentius* ( without which all the rest signifie but little ) we will joyn issue with him. 'Tis this;

Neither says he ( in that little Book ( I do not quote the page, because the whole is but small ) are all ways, and all kinds ( he means of Innovations ) to be impugned after this manner, but such only as are new, and the lately sprung; whilst by the straitness of time they be hindred from falsifying the rules of the ancient Faith; and before ( their poison spreading ) they attempt to corrupt the writings of the Elders.

Oh, my Friend, are we arrived there? Nay, then we shall do well enough; the world is pretty well advertised ( by several hands ) what your Church of *Rome* has done in that kind; and I hope there are some instances in my Triple-Crown.

III. We have left ( yet ) one thing behind, which though it be *Vox & pre-terita Nihil*, is thought able ( in the hands of this Master of Arts ) to strike us all dumb, I mean Oral Tradition: But, pray Sir, was not that the same, whereby the Law of God was become of none effect ( and so declared by himself, *Matth. 15.* ) in our Saviours time?

He that considers the Parable ( *Matth. 13. 24.* ) will not wonder that the Lord of the Field should ask, Whence are those Tares? And when I read the Eleventh to the *Romans*, at *Verf. 22.* I cannot hinder my self from concluding it very possible, that that Church ( also ) may be cut off.

Surely many Circumstances that co-operated to the debauching of the Jewish-worship, have passed likewise over the *Romish*: Inundation of Barbarians, Ignorance, Ambition, have had several runs, and long reigns too: ask *Platina*, If this Calumny was invented by Protestants.

I must confess, 'twas less abhorrent to my reason when you pinned all upon the single infallibility of the Chair at *Rome*, ( by vertue of a promise, if any such could have been produced ) than to let all hang ( now ) on so wavering a pin as Oral Tradition. The most think ( I hope ) *Dr. Tillotson* has pretty well beaten you off from that shred of a shelter. And would you but impartially peruse the late *Bishop Cosin* his History of your Transubstantiation, you would not ( sure ) talk so vainly of Bakers bread, and the like Flams. We own such a real presence ( even *Calvin* himself does so )

so) of the Body and Blood of Christ, to every due receiver; as either the Scripture or true Primitive Fathers do require; without needing any of those Philosophical Disquisitions, which your notion (as to this great point) must engage all Mankind unto, if they be not meer Animals.

For to tell us, that all your good Catholicks hold firmly the thing, though they dispute the manner of Transubstantiation, (when the whole stands upon no sure foot, either of Divine Revelation, or sufficiently made-out testimony, and is altogether unaccountable at the Bar of Reason) will not (sure) make any Profelytes.

When I find (*Heb. 7. 27.*) that our High priest needeth not dayly to offer up Sacrifice; for this he did once, when he offered up himself; I wonder in what shape the necessity of a dayly true and proper Sacrifice appeared to get possession of so many mens Phancies, especially if the last verse of the next Chapter, and its coherence might be considered.

IV. Now Sir, I must acknowledg your learned Harang concerning miracles, is very Seraphical and highly surprizing: give me leave (to serve you) by adding thereto a few remarques, the Collection whereof (out of a huge Volume) was a whole tedious winters work unto me, but diverted my Company, sometimes as we sate over our Coal fire in the Country.

Be it known unto all men (therefore) by these presents, That a couple of great *Romish* Doctors, (whether they were Masters of Arts; or no, I know not (*Claudius de rota*, and *Jacobus de Voragine*, printed at *Lions*, Anno 1519, to be read to the people on Holy-days, and to heighten their zeal, (as the prefixt Epistle declares), and for the direction of Parish-Priests; A golden Legend, wherein there are plenty of such Stories as (here) follow.

▲ Fol. 100. latter page.

1. A certain Woman, deprived of the comfort of her Husband; and having one only Son, whom she loved dearly: This Son hapned to be taken by his Enemies, and fast bound in prison; which when the Mother came to know, she wept beyond all expression: But having an huge Devotion towards the blessed Virgin, she plyed her with Prayers for his deliverance: At last, seeing that that would not do, she goes all alone into the Church, where there was a graven Image of the Virgin; and our Saviour in her arms: This disconsolate widow placing her self just before the Image, speaks to it in these words, *O blessed Virgin, Thus long have I supplicated thee for my sons freedom, but without effect; thou hast had no pity on me, a poor Mother; I have implored thine assistance and patronage for him; but without any fruit. Therefore now, as my Son is taken from me, so I'll take thy Son from thee, and put him in safe Custody, as a pledg for mine.* This said, she snatch'd away the Child which the Virgin held cuddling in her arms;  
away



away she hys home with it, laps it up in pure Linnen, puts it in a Chest, and locks it very (yea, very) securely; rejoycing (now) that she had got so good a Pledg for her Son. She watches it very diligently; and behold, the night following, the blessed Virgin appears to the young man in prison, throws open the Door, knocks off his Fetters; bids him go out, and tell his Mother, That since she had got her Son again, she must restore to her likewise her own. The released Captive does so; there was (then) joy enough; They took the Image of the Child, go (both of them) to the Church, put it where they found it; the Woman saying, Lady, I thank thee, that thou hast returned my only Son to me: And lo, here is now thine again; Forasmuch, as I do own the receipt of mine.

Fol. 151.

2. There was (at another time) a Thief that had committed many Robberies: But yet this Thief had great Devotion to the blessed Virgin; and saluted her (I cannot English the word in the Original otherwise, for it is *crebrius salutavit*) very often. At an unlucky season, this Youngster plays one of his pranks, is apprehended, arraign'd, and adjudged to die by the Rope; but when he was thrown off the Ladder, immediately the Virgin (*horresco referens*) was not only at his elbow; but for three whole days seemed (that is, was seen by him, and I know not whether by others too) so to support him, as he felt no harm.

Those that hanged him (passing by, and seeing him alive, with chearfulness in his looks) did imagin the Fatal-cord had not been right noos'd; were about to have dispatch'd him with their swords; but blessed *Mary* (so the Book phrases it) opposed her own hands to the blows, and they could not hurt him. Knowing then, and hearing him relate, That the Virgin was so much his friend; they took him down, dismissed him: And he betaking himself to a Monastery, spent the rest of his days in the service of the Mother of God; that is (as I humbly conceive) in repeating *Ave-Marias's*.

This is fully enough, as to temporal deliverances. But observe next, matters of an higher frame; and if your faith cannot get up to them, you'll find enough to wounder at.

3. I do not cite the page, not having the Book by me: But I am sure it's there.

There was (once) a good old Priest in *France*, near an arm of the Sea, who never fail'd to sing the Canonical hours of the Virgin *Mary*, very duly: But so it hapned, that he had crossed the water to a certain Town; and there lay'd with another mans Wife. As he came back (over this mouth of the River *Sein*), and had no body in the Boat with him, He began to Chant the foresaid hours; and just as he entred upon the Invitatory (*Ave Maria gratia plena*) he was in the midst of the Flood; when

when an huge Troop of Devils threw him and his little Ship together headlong into the Deep. But on the third day after the Mother of Jesus (and in her Company a great many Angels) came to the place where those Devils were tormenting him, she ask'd them, why they so unjustly afflicted the Soul of her Servant? they made answer, We ought of right to have him, for we took him in our employment; nay, says she, but if they ought to have him whose work he was about, Give me him, for he was singing my Mattens when you slew him; therefore you (who never did so much for me) are more guilty. Hearing this, those foul Fiends sneak'd away. She restored his Soul to his Body, took him by the arm, made the waters stand as a wall on both sides to guard him, brought him (delivered thus from a double death) safe to shore. He falls down, embraces her knees, beseeching her to tell him what he should do for her who had delivered him from the jaws of the Lion, and the pit of Hell: She gently desired him, *That he would not commit adultery any more, lest a worse thing happen unto him; and said further,* which is the up-shot and design of the Story) *I intreat one thing more of thee, that thou wilt (for ever) with devotion keep the feast of my Conception on the 6th of the Ides of December, and preach it up, that all may do so.*

How will they ever look this blessed Mother of our Lord in the face, that have said such wild things to her, and of her?

Fol. 124. latter page.

4. Harken to a strange Story, which our Author says he had from a famous Doctor.

There was a Woman who (her Husband being dead) fell into despair, with foresight of poverty: to her the Devil appeared; telling her, If she would do his will, he would make her rich enough; she consents: and he enjoins her, First. That she should draw all Ecclesiastical Persons that came to her house (for we may suppose her an Hostess) into Fornication. Secondly, That she should seem to take in poor people on the day-time, and then at night turn them out. Thirdly, That she should hinder Prayers in the Church, by chatting or scolding. Fourthly, That she should never confess. At last, She comes to die; her Son (a good well-meaning young man) would have her to Confession: But she (telling him what she had done) cries out, she could not confess, neither would it do her any good: But after he had wept pitifully a great while, and promised he would do Penance for her; at length she became compunct, and sent away this Son of hers for a Priest: But seeing that the Devil (before he had got back) had rush'd upon her, and she through fear and horror was dead; he (confessing in her stead, and having done seven years Penance for her) saw his Mother come again, and render him abundance of thanks, for she was thereby (here lies the marrow of the matter) out of Purgatory.

These are pretty, mild, benevolent Treatments, and may work right on soft gentle Spirits; but there are too, rough stubborn hearts which must be broken: listen therefore to a pleasant Tale.

Fol. 143.

5. (For the honour of St. *Nicholas*) This Saints Letany (or rather his Legend) had not been received in the Church, called *Sancta-Cruce*; The Brothers all sollicite their Prior, that they might sing it; he (a Puritanical old man) would not consent, saying, he liked not Novelties. The *Friars* were (still) very urgent with him, so that at last he told them roundly, that he would never have any new (yea, jocular) Songs in his Church, desiring them to be content. You must know (though) that when St. *Nicholas* day drew near, and many of those Brothers sung their Mattens all in grief (their Day-break Mattens it must be understood, for they were gone to Bed soon after, as the Book holds forth), in comes St. *Nicholas*, looks grim on the poor Prior, drags him from his Bed by the hair of the head, and thumping it soundly against the Pavement of the Dormitory, He begins this Antephony: *O Pastor Bone*, &c. at every stop or pause through the whole, giving him a sound Lash upon the bare—(with Rods he had brought with him for the very nonce) doubling them in order, and singing in a slow manner, till he came at the very end. And now when all the rest were roused by the Out-cries of the Prior, they found him half dead, and drew him into his Couch again. At last he came to himself, and only said, Go your ways, ever hereafter be sure to sing the new History of St. *Nicholas*.

Fol. 38, the latter page.

6. There is one so quaint, so fine, and well contrived, that I cannot pass without it, (though I step a great way back to retrieve it), and it runs thus:

A Soldier of great rank, gave over that Trade, and put himself into a Monastery; the Prior and Brothers were out of Countenance, to have a man of so much repute in any inferior employments; but it seems none might come to the preferment of being one of them (I guess this might be in, or about the ninth Age) unless he were Book-learned; so they set one to teach him to read: he could never reach further than *Ave-Maria*, all *England* (yet it was (I think) in *Spain*, or rather in the *Indies*, before their discovery) could not make him advance beyond those two words: but then he cons to some purpose, walking, eating, or whatever he was about, he repeated them: And lo! when he dyed, there grew upon his grave a delicate white Lilly, and every Leaf had *Ave-Maria* upon it in Golden Letters; the whole Covent were in a ster upon this miracle; and having



having opened his resting-place or Tomb, found that the root of the Flower was in his very mouth, thence they concluded how highly his Devotion was accounted of by God. The same place gives us the History of another Military-man; who having a Castle near a road, rob'd all that came near him without any compassion; yet this man, whatever his business was, would not leave the Virgin *Mary* unsaluted in the morning. It hapned that an holy Man of God was passing by, is seized upon by these Troopers: He requires them to carry him before their Captain, for he had a great secret to impart to him. Come before him, he begs of him that he would cause all his retinue to be called together, and he would preach to them the word of God. It's done forthwith; but the Holy Man told them, there was not all, they said all were there; still he insisted on't, and bid them go to the pole diligently; at last, one cries out, the Groom of the Chamber is wanting; he's searcht for, found, and brought in, hangs back, makes terrible ugly faces, and cannot be forced to look that way the Priest stood: who going to him, Adjures him to tell truly who he was, and upon whose errand he came thither: Out, alas, exclaims the Groom; Now I am adjured, all must out: Truly I am no man, but a Devil; here I have been (sent by *Belzebub* our Prince) to watch this Soldier these forty long years; and if ever I could have found a day whereon he had not said the Salutation, he had been ours, and hurtied to hell with all his sins about him; but he never left of that armour of Proof. The Captain at this was hugely amazed, cast himself at the Holy Mans feet, and as may be hoped mended. The Fiend was packt away too with this injunction: *I Command thee, Devil, to depart, confining thee to such a place; and be sure thou never hurtest any that does invoke the Glorious Mother of God.*

Fol. 87.

7. Another man with a sword, having wasted all his plentiful estate profusely, had yet a Wife singularly addicted and devoted to the blessed Virgin. A time drawing near wherein he had used to express large bounty, but finding too he could not do so still, for very shame he withdrew into a solitary place to bewail his Condition; where behold, an huge terrible Horse, with one on his back no less so, came towards him; the Rider ask'd, why so sad? well, he told him; whereto the Devil (for 'twas no other) replied, do what I'll Command thee, and thou shalt have wealth at will. That bargain was soon struck; and the very good Wife too, given to Satan, made the Condition; Houses, Lands, and all fine things are soon re-purchased; but at last the promised time comes. The man calls his Wife, bids her make ready to take a long journey with him, she trembling, and suspecting some ill, yet not daring to disobey; Commends her self most devoutly to the Virgin, and so mounts on Horse-back behind her Husband. After they had rid a good way, they came close by a Church;

she leaps off, and enters, he stays for her without ; but whilst she pray'd fervently to the Virgin, she fell suddenly fast asleep : And lo, that glorious Virgin ( in the habit and likeness of the Wife ) came off from the Altar, gets up behind the man, and away they went ; when they came within sight of the place where the Devil stood, greedily expecting them ; the Fiend fell a quaking, and having said, *Didst not thou engage to bring thy Wife to me, whom I meant here to have been avenged of for all the harm she has done me ; and thou hast brought the Mother of God, who will punish me, and send me down to Hell.* At this the Soldiers courage failed, he was not able to utter one word ; but the blessed *Mary* did, saying, *Thou wicked spirit, how darest thou offer to think of hurting one of my servants, thou shalt not scape for this ; get thee to Hell, &c.* The Devil presently sneak'd away, howling ; the man ( being instructed by her ) got his yet-sleeping Wife by the hand, wakes her, jogs merrily home, and lived ( I cannot tell how long ) well together.

And now ( if this be true ) who that can but say *Ave Maria*, before he breaks his fast, need care how he spends the day ? hot Adulteries, Thefts, Robberies, Compacts with Satan, &c. all are brought easily off ; not only the blessed Virgin, but Saint *Barbary*, ( Fol. 155 ) have been able to secure their Votaries from dying without Confession and priestly absolution : and we see here, that they may either have it done effectually upon themselves, or by others in their stead after their departure, ( as in Story 4 ). Nay, one may have a fair pull to be brought out of Purgatory or Hell without much harm, ( as in Story 3 ).

This is such a way of making Christs yoke easie, and his burthen light, as he ( doubtless ) never thought of ; it may be indeed the product of Oral Tradition.

We will have but one more, Fol. 79. latter side.

A little before the world was blest with the preaching-Order of Saint *Dominick*, the blessed Mother was seen ( by a certain Monk ) on her knees before Christ, importuning him for the sparance of Mankind : He denied her often, yet still she interceded ; then he thus bespeaks her, *O Mother ! what can I do more, or what ought I more to do ? I sent Patriarchs, little or no amendment followed ; I sent Apostles, Doctors, Martyrs, still no better ; but because 'tis not lawful to deny you, I'll send Preachers of my own, meaning the Dominicans ; yet another relates after this manner :*

*Dominic* himself, whilst he was at Rome, saw in a Vision Christ ready with three Darts to destroy the World : But his Mother comes to him with these words, *Good Son, temper your anger ; I have in store a faithful strenuous Champion, lets see what he can do, and I will add a Coadjutor to him full as worthy :* To this Christ replies, *I have accepted your suit ; but ( pray ) what man is this ?* Then she pointed out St. *Dominic* ; yes, says he, *this is a man indeed :* next St. *Francis* was shewed, and got the same applause ; so the establishment of their Orders were decreed ( for no body durst

durst oppose it after so miraculous a Vision ) and what work they have made in the world, let all men judg, or at least we shall know at the last day.

These are a few out of many thousands, wherein nothing but prodigious folly, lightness, superstition; nay, *Phanatasm* (truly so called) can be discerned, generally used even till that day, as the Printer tells us, having finish'd that happy work, Anno 1519.

And here I do call upon the late Author of the Catholick Naked Truth, to tell us, how he will (with all his flanting Rhetorick) bring off his so highly celebrated Church from the allowed (publicly countenanced) practise of most gross Superstition, Idolatry, and Sin; these are not untrue slanders invented by Protestants, nor single conceits of some whimsical, distemper'd, inconsiderate Man (the usual way he takes to daub over the greatest spots in her face) but the common known mode of those times. Again, he knows well enough how familiar it has been with them to grant (for money) Licenses of Concubination; and what was, (for ought I know) is yet the common use of those Indulgences, which he represents as so holy, so innocent, so justifiable. Irrationally, whilst he denies the imputation of Christs merits to truly penitent Converts; allowing the imputation of the treasure of the Church (in Saints merits) by the Pope, to all that have but confessed to a Priest, with some semblance of Attrition.

Let him receive one Note (and make the best he can of it) in reference to his so much talk'd of Oral Tradition: The present Jews seem to be as fond of, and as careful in that fine thing as ever they were; and we cannot suppose they are less unwilling then we, every man to deceive his Child; yet, is it not notorious, what strange and incredible notions they have admitted into their full belief.

To conclude, I do not think (as this Gentleman well, and with much Art observes) it probable, that a pack of men could all in a night build an house, and the next day make all the nation believe it was brought to that place by Angels, out of a far Countrey; yet it is (me-thinks) possible, that (in an Age wholly given to place their Religion in adoring and adorning Images, in founding and enriching Monastries) a combined company of men, all of that frame, might pitch upon such a convenient spot as *Loretto*, where was a venerable old Edifice standing, and with ease enough might persuade the people (who were taught ever and anon to gape at such news from Heaven) that some Anchorite, Hermit or Monk, had (now) a Revelation, (and with it a Command) to assure the world, This ancient happy structure had travelled on the backs of Ministring Spirits (a Century or two before) even as far, and by what Stages themselves should think fit. He cannot be ignorant how many famous Foundations have been laid upon the account of such Cœlestial discoveries; if he be, let him but peruse that Volume out of which I took the foregoing relations, and he



will find abundance of such a nature, as must needs stop the mouth of his Credulity, be it as wide and as voracious as it will.

I have read that trim Book wherein the Jesuit *Turcillin* sweats so much to prove this weighty point (touching *Loretto*), and I did it once in the company of an honest wise man (of *Romes* Religion) but I dare appeal even to himself, whether what we found there, gave not occasion for him to run off, and me to keep my ground.

Implicit Faith ('tis true) involves all, may take in any thing; but he that finds in that Elaborate Piece, what may create a rational belief (I am sure there is no Scripture evidence, nor Revelation of that kind for it) must use better spectacles (or rather magnifying glasses) then ever I could find out; and both my Age and other obligations require, that I should make the best Quest I am any way able. My last reflection (upon what I find in this Authors 41 page) shall be, to take heed how we follow a Multitude.

It was *Diana*, the *Ephesians* and all the world were once said (confidently enough) to Worship.

That we may apply the four or six last pages to our present enquiry, (the Infallibility of Oral Tradition back'd with miracles) Let us suppose, in reference to the third story, that the French Priest had stood in a Corner, (when he was a pregnant forth-putting youth) and heard his Father say, If any Person had a particular Devotion to the blessed Virgin, *St. Bridget*, *Ferom*, or any other Saint, and (committing the care and conduct of his life to their guidance) was careful (daily) to perform to them, or for their sake, (some singular Act of Piety (such as saying over so many *Aves*, *Pater-Nosters*, or the like) He might be sure not to fail in his last and great concern; he should not miss of, before his death, time to Confess, and receive Priestly Absolution: If he had over-heard his grave Parent farther whisper, That in respect of a married estate in the Clergy (for we will imagine it to be since *St. Dunstan's* days) Concubination or Adultery were but Pccadillio's, (a notion that the frame of this and other Legends were very likely to produce) how could he chuse but give reins to his appetite upon this account; and think he was as good a Christian as the Ages before had required a man to be? And the succeeding Age, probably the Ninth, would not see any reason, but to go on in the same path, as we may conjecture they did, from a considerate view of the hundred Grievances, by the *Germans* presented to the Popes Legat a few years after, the publication of those illustrious Novels.

